

Court Facility Utilization Study: Public Meeting, October 21, 2009

National Center for State Courts

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Project Update:

- Project Kick Off
- Review Previous Planning Assumptions
- First Site Visit
- Second Site Visit
- Interim Report: “Issue Papers”

Public Meeting

- Development of Strategic Directions
- Final Report & Presentation

Identification of the Issues / Strategies for Addressing Future Space Needs:

Background:

- Review Previous Court Planning Assumptions

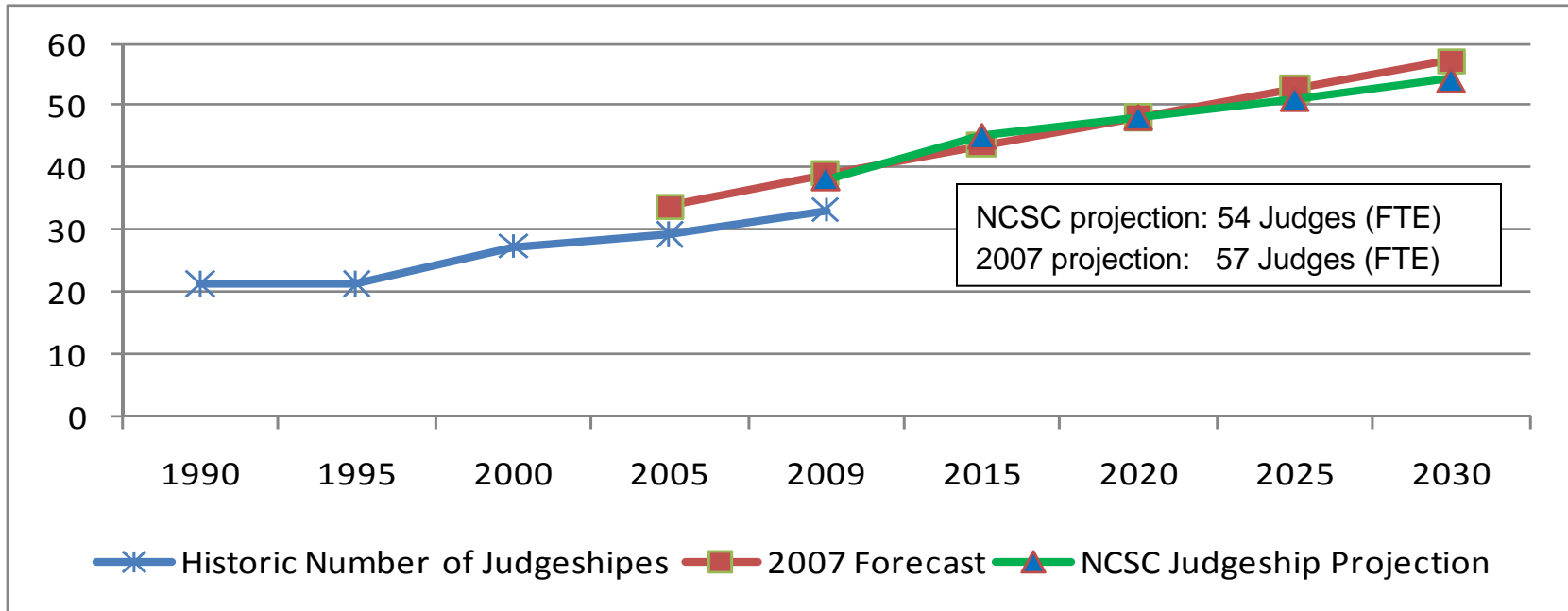
Court Operations

- Court Decentralization
- Relocation of juvenile adjudication functions
- Court Efficiency/Court Performance
- Utilization of Courtroom Technology
- Night Court
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Parking
- Courthouse Security
- Jury Management
- Fines and Fees Collection

Facilities Utilization

- Individual Facility Assessments

Judgeship Projections



- 1) Recent case filing trends indicate a slower rate of growth than forecasts completed in 2007.
- (2) Judges FTE = District Court, Associate District Court and Magistrate Court Judicial Officers.

Analysis of the Issues: Questions and Answers

Court Decentralization

Q: Should select court functions be decentralized to improve services and free space in the Historic Courthouse?

A: Yes, but thorny policy questions on public access, security, caseload growth, and economics must be addressed regarding what should be decentralized, where it should be sited, and how it should be phased.

Relocation of the Juvenile Court

Q: Should the Juvenile Court be removed from the historic courthouse and what are the primary adjacency considerations for a relocated Juvenile Court facility?

A: Yes, the Juvenile Court should be removed from the Historic Courthouse. The new location should enhance the overall ability of the juvenile justice system to perform its work by strengthening the adjacencies among the three primary partners: court, probation, and detention.

Analysis of the Issues: Questions and Answers

Court Efficiency/Court Performance

Q: How does the court compare to similar courts nationwide based on recognized trial court performance standards: ACCESS TO JUSTICE... EXPEDITION AND TIMELINESS... EQUALTY, FAIRNESS AND INTEGRITY... INDEPENDENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY... PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE?

A: Good on all measures except physical access (safety, security, convenience, wayfinding) issues involving the Historic Courthouse.

Utilization of Court Technology

Q: How can the utilization of technology help address space needs for the Court?

A: Implementation of new court technology in the Court is funded and administered by the Iowa State Court Administration Office. The Court is actively participating in new state technology initiatives that will have a limited effect on future space needs. Areas of impact include courtroom technology, internet customer service, and electronic document management systems (EDMS).

Analysis of the Issues: Questions and Answers

Night Court

Q: Can night or after-hours court reduce space problems experienced by the District Court in Polk County?

A: No. The experience of trial courts nationally indicate costs of after-hours adjudication generally outweigh any benefits derived. The exception is jail court sessions (i.e. initial appearances) which Polk County already operates.

Mediation

Q: Can expanded mediation reduce overcrowding and help remedy space difficulties in the Historic Courthouse?

A: Yes, but only marginally.

Parking

Q: Is parking typically provided on or near court facilities for court staff and public visitors in similar courts located in metropolitan, downtown business districts?

A: No. Free and secure parking is normally provided only for judicial officers and senior officials in most courts. General court staff and visiting members of the public more often than not must pay for parking at off-site parking garages and surface lots. The exception: jurors.

Analysis of the Issues: Questions and Answers

Courthouse Security – Separate Zones of Circulation

Q: Is it appropriate for the court to operate within its current building configuration utilizing a shared system of circulation for judicial staff, in-custody defendants, and members of the public?

A: It is not advised. Separate zones of circulation are basic to the overall safe and secure operation of general jurisdiction courts where criminal cases are adjudicated. Admittedly, older courthouses were not designed in such a fashion and are very costly to retro-fit.

Jury Management

Q: Can space complications and courthouse congestion be lessened through improved jury management?

A: Somewhat, but not without relocation, substantial remodeling, and procedural changes.

Fines and Fee Collection

Q: Can court fines and fees be increased locally to help pay for future judicial facilities in Polk County?

A: No, court fines and fees are uniformly established throughout all courts of the state by the Iowa Legislature; not the Court or Board of Supervisors in Polk County.

Facilities Utilization Assessments

Historic Courthouse Renovation

Utilization considered:

General trial accommodations including ancillary functions for general civil and family courts. A renovated Historic Courthouse concept may also include consideration for limited criminal adjudication functions.

Space available:

121,000sf

Number of courtrooms:

15

Cost:

\$21.5 million

Benefits:

- Source of civic pride
- Underground tunnel to Old Jail
- Central to other justice system agencies

Challenges:

- Phasing of renovations
- Open atrium configuration
- Sensitivity to historic architecture

Polk County Convention Center

Utilization considered:

General and criminal trial functions including ancillary support spaces and 3 zones of circulation; jury assembly; clerk of the court and court administration offices.

Space available:

165,000sf

Number of courtrooms:

21

Cost:

\$40 million

Benefits:

- Physical suitability
- Timing of building availability
- County owned facility

Challenges:

- Decentralization of core court functions
- Adequacy of detainee transportation & staging facilities
- Perimeter building security

Wellmark Building

Utilization considered:

General trial functions including ancillary support spaces and 2 zones of circulation; jury assembly; clerk of the court and court administration offices. Existing office space may also be utilized for non-court county functions.

Space available:

172,500sf

Number of courtrooms:

22

Cost:

\$45-50 million
(+/- \$11.3 million building acquisition)

Benefits:

- Physical suitability
- Timing of building availability
- Adjacency to Historic Courthouse
- Availability for multi-justice agency use.

Challenges:

- Cost of acquisition
- Large portion of space is below grade

Facilities Utilization Assessments

Old Main Jail

<p>Utilization considered: Criminal court adjudication including ancillary functions.</p>
<p>Space available: 42,000sf</p>
<p>Number of courtrooms: 9-11</p>
<p>Cost: \$13 million plus</p>
<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Building is largely vacant and available (County owned) •Utilization of existing prisoner transportation, staging and holding facilities •Underground connection to Historic Courthouse
<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Structural suitability •Time to build additional space •Court is considering minimal use of the building now

Ruan Towers

<p>Utilization considered: General trial functions including ancillary support spaces.</p>
<p>Space available: 182,000sf</p>
<p>Number of courtrooms: +/-20</p>
<p>Cost: n/a</p>
<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Timing of building availability
<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Decentralization of core court functions •Ceiling heights inadequate •Floor plates not suited for courtroom tenant improvement •Cost of leased space

120 2nd Avenue Building

<p>Utilization considered: Juvenile Court including ancillary support spaces and 3 zones of circulation.</p>
<p>Space available: 18,000sf (27,000sf available if Polk Election Commission were relocated)</p>
<p>Number of courtrooms: 3-4 (5-6 courtrooms if Election Commission were relocated)</p>
<p>Cost: \$9.3 million (18,000sf option) \$9.9 million (28,000sf option)</p>
<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Building is available (County owned) •Downtown location is convenient for justice agencies
<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •18,000sf of space available is inadequate; 27,000sf of space available is marginal •Not located adjacent to Juvenile Court Services or Juvenile Detention & Shelter •High cost of renovation per square foot •Detainee transportation

Facilities Utilization Assessments

Riverpoint

<p><u>Utilization considered:</u> Temporary juvenile court including ancillary support spaces.</p>
<p><u>Space available:</u> +/-28,000sf</p>
<p><u>Number of courtrooms:</u> 5-6</p>
<p><u>Cost:</u> \$2.8 million (assumes \$100/sf tenant improvement allowance)</p>
<p><u>Benefits:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Space is available for lease •Court has existing functions in building (Small Claims Court) •Location is convenient for justice agencies
<p><u>Challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Floor plates not suited for courtroom tenant improvement •Not located adjacent to Juvenile Court Services or Juvenile Detention & Shelter •Not a long-term solution •Expands lease space and costs •Ceiling heights are inadequate

Riverplace

<p><u>Utilization considered:</u> Temporary juvenile court including ancillary support spaces.</p>
<p><u>Space available:</u> 18,000sf</p>
<p><u>Number of courtrooms:</u> 3-4</p>
<p><u>Cost:</u> \$1.8 million (assumes \$100/sf tenant improvement allowance)</p>
<p><u>Benefits:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Space is available (County owned) •Ceiling heights and structural spans are adequate •Adjacency to Juvenile Court Services and Department of Human Services •Accessible for public and justice agencies
<p><u>Challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Inadequate amount of space •Potential floodplain problems

Juvenile Detention Center Campus

<p><u>Utilization considered:</u> Juvenile court including ancillary support spaces and 3 zones of circulation.</p>
<p><u>Space available:</u> 43,500sf (space may be reduced if detainee holding is removed from the building program)</p>
<p><u>Number of courtrooms:</u> 7</p>
<p><u>Cost:</u> \$12.4 million</p>
<p><u>Benefits:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Land is available (County owned) •Adjacency to Polk County Detention and Youth Shelter reduces travel for in custody transportation and travel for Juvenile Court Officers. •Opportunity for long term consolidation of Juvenile Justice agencies on one campus •Co-location with detention removes need to build detainee facilities
<p><u>Challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Location is not overly convenient

Questions & Discussion